

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE, GW, AU, SU, US

SUBJECT: ROUNDTABLE WITH GDR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
EXPERT

REF: PARIS 7427 NOTAL

1. DR. KARL-ERNST PLAGEMANN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT
POTSDAM'S INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
ACCOMPANIED BY GDR DCM, DR. KLAUS MONTAG, PARTICIPATED
IN LIVELY ROUNDTABLE IN DEPARTMENT MARCH 8. DURING
REASONABLY FRANK BUT CORDIAL HOUR-LONG EXCHANGE,
PLAGEMANN AND MONTAG TOUCHED ON CONSULAR CONVENTION,
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GDR ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, SPIEGEL "MANIFESTO,"
BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRG, GDR MEDIA TREATMENT OF US,
AND MBFR.

2. MONTAG CARRIED BALL ON CONSULAR CONVENTION,
STATING THAT GDR RECOGNIZES VALIDITY OF US LEGAL
ARGUMENTS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IT DOES NOT USUALLY

DEFINE NATIONALITY IN SUCH AGREEMENTS BUT ADDING THAT THIS IS UNUSUAL CASE. WE "MUST," HE CONTINUED, REACH A COMPROMISE THAT WILL PROTECT GDR POSITION AND, AT SAME TIME, PROTECT US POSITION, WHICH IS "BASED, AT LEAST IN PART, ON FRG POSITION." WE WILL, HE SAID "ADDRESS THE FORMULATIONS YOU HAVE PUT ON THE TABLE." THE REASON IT IS TAKING SO LONG TO DO SO, HE CLAIMED, IS THAT THE GDR MUST "DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WITH WHOM WE HAVE RELATIONS AND WITH WHOM WE ARE NEGOTIATING SIMILAR AGREEMENTS." HE SINGLED OUT FRANCE AS ONE OF THE LATTER AND NOTED THAT BRITAIN HAD "FOLLOWED A DIFFERENT COURSE."

3. PLAGEMANN ADMITTED THAT GDR FACES DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION, CAUSED PRINCIPALLY BY INCREASED RAW MATERIAL PRICES AND SHORTAGE OF HARD CURRENCY. INTERSHOP SYSTEM, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO EASE LATTER PROBLEM, HAS, HE ALLOWED, CAUSED GRIPING AMONG THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE HARD CURRENCY. MONTAG INTERRUPTED TO ASSERT THAT ANOTHER CAUSE OF GDR'S ECONOMIC WOES IS ITS ENDEMIC LABOR SHORTAGE. THERE ARE, HE OPINED, TWO COURSES OF ACTION THAT MUST BE TAKEN IN THIS REGARD, THE FIRST BEING THE IMPORTATION OF LABOR-SAVING TECHNOLOGY FROM THE WEST AND THE SECOND BEING SPECIALIZATION WITHIN CEMA AND CONCENTRATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITHIN GDR WHICH WILL REDUCE NUMBER OF JOBS. IN LATTER REGARD, HE NOTED "THERE HAVE BEEN MISTAKES MADE LIKE THE BUILDING OF THE NEW PETROCHEMICAL PLANT WHICH HAS CREATED NEED FOR NEW JOBS." WHILE ADMITTING THAT THERE WERE POLES, HUNGARIANS AND ALGERIANS WORKING IN GDR, PLAGEMANN DISMISSED SUGGESTION THAT GDR IMPORT LARGE NUMBERS OF GUEST WORKERS AS FRG HAD DONE, SINCE GDR'S NEED IS FOR SKILLED WORKERS "WHOM WE MUST TRAIN" RATHER THAN FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS NEEDED TO JOBS GERMANS DO NOT WANT TO DO. PLAGEMANN ALSO MADE BLUNT PLEA FOR MFN.

4. WHEN ASKED ABOUT GDR'S SPECIAL ECONOMIC TIES TO FRG, PLAGEMANN ALLUDED TO FACT THAT "WE SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE" AS A FACTOR FAVORING TRADE BETWEEN TWO GERMANYS. BUT, HE ADDED, "WE SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE AS THE AUSTRIANS, TOO, AND THE MORE NATIONALIZED NATURE OF THEIR INDUSTRY MAKES IT EASIER FOR US TO DEVELOP TRADE ON A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT BASIS." FOR THESE REASONS, HE PREDICTED A GROWTH IN GDR-AUSTRIAN TRADE.

5. ASKED ABOUT THE RATIONALE FOR AND POSSIBLE RESULTS OF BREZHNEV'S TRIP TO BONN, PLAGEMANN SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT THERE AND THE "DANGER" THAT A CDU GOVERNMENT MIGHT DRASTICALLY ALTER OSTPOLITIK. BREZHNEV'S TRIP, HE SAID, WOULD SET THE "FRAMEWORK" FOR A GENERAL CONTINUATION OF THAT POLICY ALONG CURRENT LINES. WITHIN SUCH A "FRAMEWORK," CHANGES INSTITUTED BY THE CDU SHOULD NOT AMOUNT TO MORE THAN SLIGHT SHIFTS OF EMPHASIS. CONCERNING PERSONALITIES, PLAGEMANN TERMED KOHL A "REASONABLE" MAN BUT EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BIEDENKOPF'S CHANCES FOR MOVING UP. MONTAG THEN INDICATED THAT BREZHNEV WOULD ALSO PROPOSE TO SCHMIDT STEPS DESIGNED TO GET THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VIENNA TALKS ON MBFR OFF THE DIME.

6. CHIDED ABOUT THE NEGATIVE COVERAGE OF THE US IN THE GDR PRESS, MONTAG STATED THAT GDR MEDIA PROCEEDS FROM BASIS OF SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS IN US AND GIVES PROMINENT PLAY TO ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THOSE CONTRADICTIONS. HE CLAIMED, HOWEVER, THAT MORE AND MORE NON-POLITICAL STORIES OF A POSITIVE BACKGROUND NATURE WERE APPEARING IN GDR MEDIA. HE CITED STORIES ON LIFE IN NEW YORK AND ON A TEXAS RANCH AND ON BROADWAY SHOWS. HE ALSO MENTIONED A RECENT GDR TV SURVEY, INDICATING THAT THE US RECEIVED MORE COVERAGE THAN ANY OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRY INCLUDING THE USSR.

7. THE SPIEGEL "MANIFESTO" WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH BUT IN NOW FAMILIAR TERMS. PLAGEMANN DID NOT DISMISS POSSIBILITY OF DOCUMENT HAVING ORIGINATED WITHIN GDR AT LOW LEVEL. HE STRESSED NON-MARXIST AND ANTI-SOVIET NATURE OF DOCUMENT AND HIS OPINION THAT GDR'S REACTION HAD BEEN "APPROPRIATE." VANCE

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